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The INNER CIRCLE

PROFILE: Shane Fisher, Art Director

Ahhh...now its time to meet Shane Fisher, eh? "cackle" Rillight>:)

Well, a scant few of you may or may not know I am the Art Director for SFA. I sit quietly behind a Macintosh G4 and pound out logo's and color covers for both Katmandu and Extinctioners, and create backpage ads like the Furry Ninja HS ad and the World Trade Center tribute ad, and other last minute production stuffs before the book goes off to print. "begin melodramatic whine" It's mostly a thankless job. Lost in the shadow of all popular artists, writers, and ...god forbid...even the lowly inkers "COUGH" Tracers!P Buuuut I battle on. It is kinda fun to work behind the curtain though. Your privy to the swirling tornado of carnage and disarray that is independent comics without getting TOTALLY sucked into the madness...or at least that's the illusion I'm most comfortable with.

Hmm..details details. If you want the nitty gritty, know that in the year of our lord, nineteen hundred and ninety seven, I graduated from the Joe Kubert school of Cartoon and Graphic arts. "You will never find a more wretched hive of scum and villainy" is an apt description of that rundown, New Jersey BOMB shelter of a school. There we toiled away under the careful tutelage of the art instructors. Our feeble artistic talents and weak pessimism were tempered into shining blades of artistic precision and bitter cynicism. We weren't always a happy bunch, but damn it sure was an interesting ride. I walked away with a degree in Graphic Arts, three weeks after graduation I was immediately struck down by a repetitive strain injury (Myofascial Pain Syndrome) in my drawing arm and in the following years nerve damage in my neck and Carpal Tunnel in my drawing hand. Well damn....that pretty much shoots my future to hell now, don't it?P But in the midst of that dark (and ongoing) point in my life I landed in the arms of Shanda Fantasy Arts. Starting out as an afore mentioned lowly inker, graduating to digital colorist after my inking abilities were destroyed, and finally to the position I am in now. As working behind a computer doesn't quite hurt me as much as drawing and inking do, I've found this to be a fun ride as well. I've met a great deal of interesting people in the process and have even been recognized ...ONCE...at a convention..P Hell, being knee deep in furry actually landed me a furry girlfriend, how rare is that, eh?I;D Oh well, so much for stardom and my fifteen minutes. Come on ya book munkies! Quit readin this pap and get on to the story!! This is just filler cause Mike couldn't get Stan Lee to write him another preface, the hack, 'is immediately struck dead by a bolt of lightning.' ...Speak no ill of "The Man"

SHANE

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PREVIOUSLY, XENIF'S ATTEMPTS AT SEDUCING PHENIX FINALLY PAY OFF AS SHE SUCCUMBS TO HIS NOT SO SUBTLE ADVANCES.



HOWEVER, THEIR PHYSICAL UNION RESULTED IN A CHAIN REACTION WHICH NEITHER EXPECTED, CAUSING THEIR BODIES TO MERGE AS ONE.



AS A RESULT, PHIONIX, THEIR PREDECESSOR IS REBORN WITH AN INTENT ON GAINING REVENGE ON ALL MORTALS.



I AM REBORN!

LET ALL THOSE WHO STAND AGAINST ME PERISH BY A DEATH OF FIRE~

FLAME TALON!

STORY AND PENCILS
INKS: STEVE ADDLESEE
GRAYTONES: MITCH SONODA
COVER COLORS: SHANE FISHER
LETTERING: CHARLES GRAY.

QUICK, TAKE
EVASIVE ACTION!

THIS AVIAN'S POWER
READINGS ARE OFF THE
SCALES!

WE HAVE TO
ACT FAST.

SO LONG AS HE'S
AIRBORNE WE DON'T
STAND A CHANCE.

PANDAMONIUM
POSITION US
ABOVE HIM.

MINDSWIPE, I
WANT EVERYONE
TELEPATHICALLY
CONNECTED.

ESTABLISHED.

OKAY.

ALLYCAT, BE READY TO
DO MANEUVER SIX ON
MY MARK.

GROAN.
I REALLY HATE
THIS.

AND STARFOX
BE READY TO GIVE
IT ALL YOU GOT.
DON'T HOLD
BACK.

DON'T HAVE TO
TELL ME TWICE.

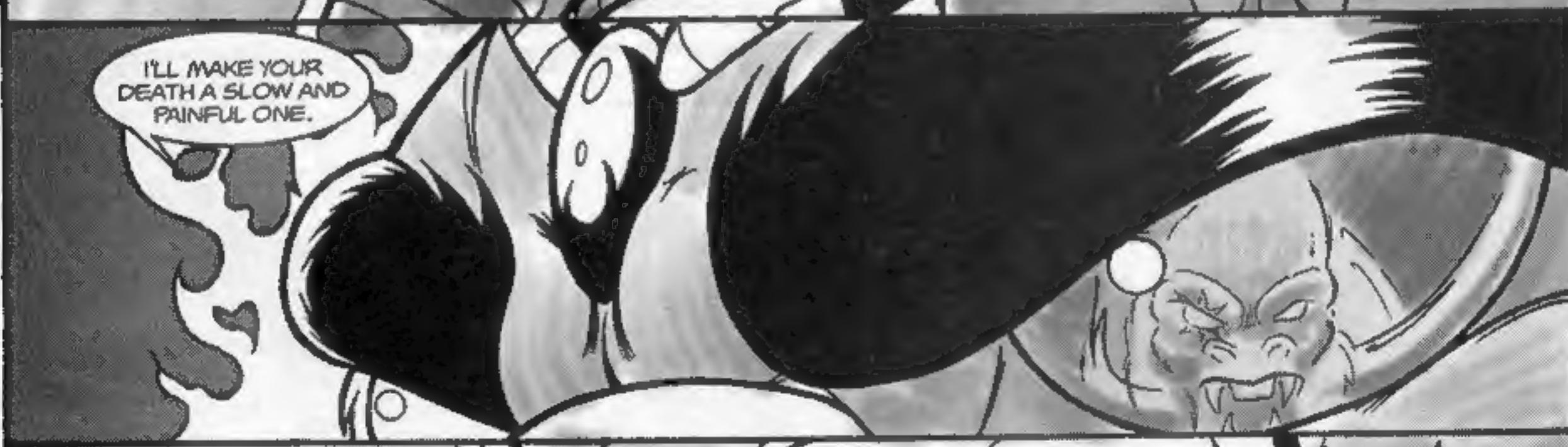
NOW STRIKE FAST AND HARD, WE CAN'T AFFORD TO GIVE HIM ANY CHANCE TO COUNTER ATTACK.



I DON'T KNOW WHO HE IS, BUT HE READS EVEN MORE POWERFUL THAN XENIF!

MAMMAL, YOU WOULD DARE ATTACK A PHOENIX?

I'LL MAKE YOUR DEATH A SLOW AND PAINFUL ONE.



NOT LIKELY.

IF YOU TRULY ARE A PHOENIX,
THEN MY STUDIES TELL ME YOU
DEPEND MORE ON YOUR POWERS
AND ABILITY TO FLY THAN ON PHYSICAL
COMBAT.

UNHAND
ME!





UMMMGGPH!

RAGH!
FREE!

DAMN YOU XENIF,
MONTHS OF PLANNING
RUINED!

SHOULD HAVE KILLED
YOU WHEN I HAD THE
CHANCE!

THERE'S THE SOUND OF
BATTLE BELOW. PERHAPS
MY JOB IS BEING DONE
FOR ME.

AH,
THE STARBLADE, I HAD
FEARED I'D LOST YOU

WITH THIS I WILL
STILL RULE ALL OF
EDEN.

NO!



MEANWHILE, ON THE GROUND.









I'LL ADMIT, FUR BEARER,
I WAS TAKEN COMPLETELY BY
SURPRISE BY YOUR ATTACK.

MY REBIRTH LEFT
ME SOMEWHAT
DISORIENTED.

BUT THESE BRIEF
MOMENTS HAVE GIVEN
ME TIME ENOUGH TIME
TO RECOVER.

ESPECIALLY THANKS TO THAT
DRAGON USING A FLAME ATTACK ON
ONE WHO WAS BORN OF THE ETERNAL
FLAMES THEMSELVES.

I HAVE TAKEN YOU R MEASURES AND FOUND YOU
WANTING. NOW I WONDER HOW WELL YOU AND
YOUR COMPANIONS CAN STAND AGAINST MINE?

"LET'S SEE,
SHALL WE?"

RRROOOOWWW!







I DON'T EVEN KNOW ABOUT THIS FUNCTION!

NOW BE QUIET!

MISSION DIRECTIVES OPEN.

ATLAS

MISSION OR

VID WIN

LOADING... II

OUR MISSION DIRECTIVES ARE TO ESTABLISH A HOLDING FOR THE COMING FLEET IT HAS BEEN DISCOVERED BY THE PREVIOUS TERRA FORMING TEAM THAT WHAT WE THOUGHT WAS A NEW PLANET WAS ACTUALLY EARTH ITSELF.



"SATELLITE SCANNING HAS SHOWN THAT THERE HAS BEEN A DRAMATIC INCREASE IN THE WATER LEVELS OF THE OCEANS, CREATING A CHANGE IN THE LAND TO WATER RATIO OF THE EARTH WE'RE FAMILIAR WITH."



"INTERCEPTED SATELLITE TRANSMISSIONS FROM THE PLANET'S SURFACE HAVE IDENTIFIED EACH CONTINENT AREA AS THE FOLLOWING. APPARENTLY, THE ORIGINAL KEEPER'S WERE SUCCESSFUL IN ESTABLISHING GOVERNMENTAL BOUNDARIES FOR OUR ARRIVAL."

HOWEVER, ALL COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE ORIGINAL KEEPER TEAM HAD BEEN LOST YEARS AGO.

VID WIN

FOOTHOLDS HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO TAKE PLACE AT EACH DESIGNATED LOCATION

THAT'S EVERY MAJOR CITY ON ALDEN! WITH A BIG X HERE!

WOW!

ALIENS!

THAT WAS A REAL ALIEN, WASN'T IT AND YOU'VE SEEN ONE HAVEN'T YOU?

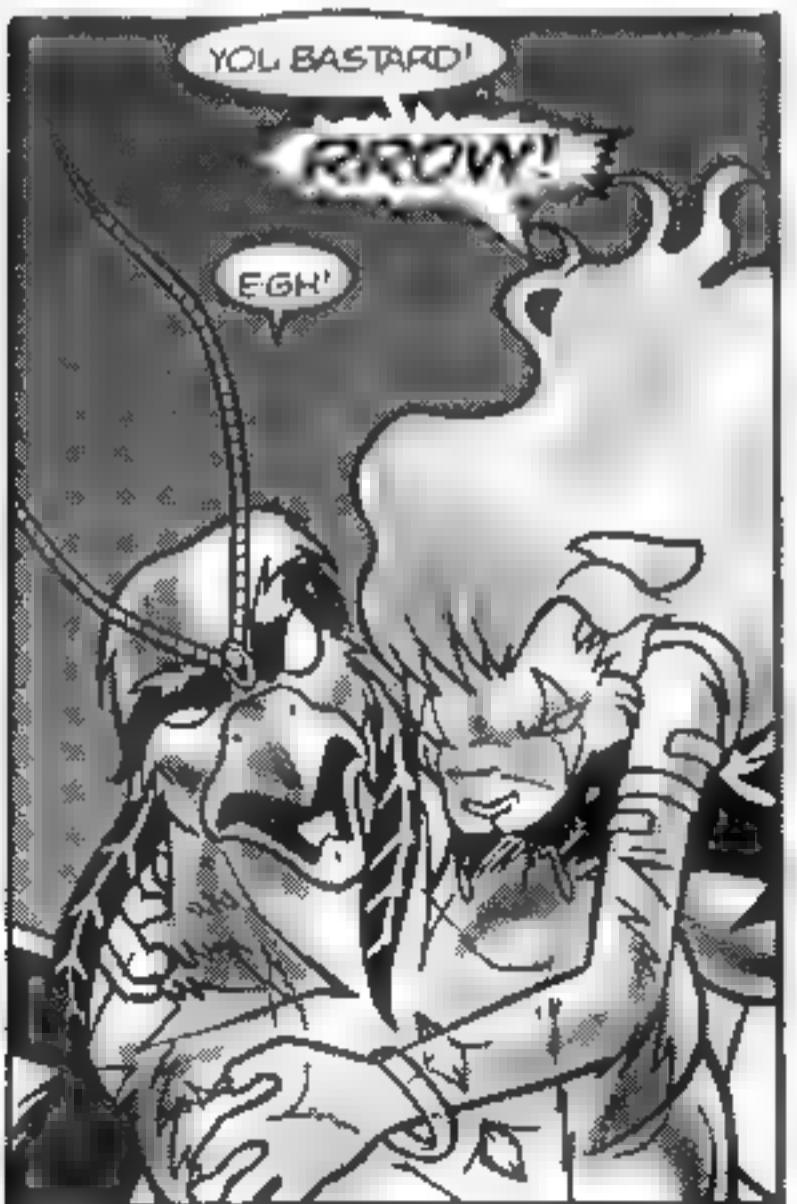
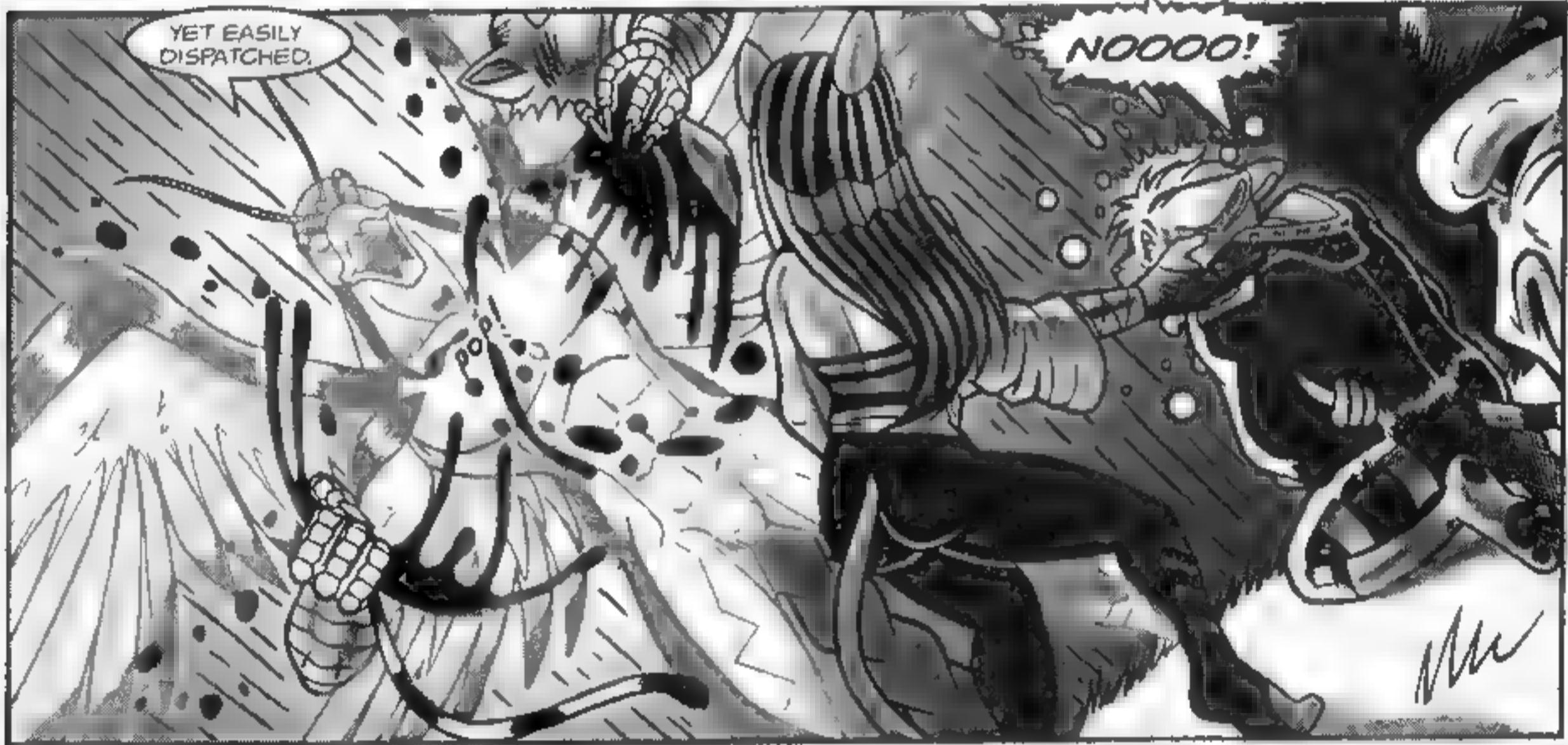
UH... YOU SAW THAT, HUH?

THE ANTHROMORPHS ARE NOW LIVING AUTONOMOUSLY WITHOUT HUMAN GUIDANCE. CONTROL OF THE PLANET WILL HAVE TO BE REESTABLISHED TO MAKE REINTRODUCTION RUN SMOOTHLY.



THAT EXPLAINS WHY I SAW THAT WEIRD PLANE TAKE OFF FROM AROUND HERE A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO.







NOW WATCH AS I
CRUSH YOUR BONES
WITH MY POWER, FROM
THE INSIDE!

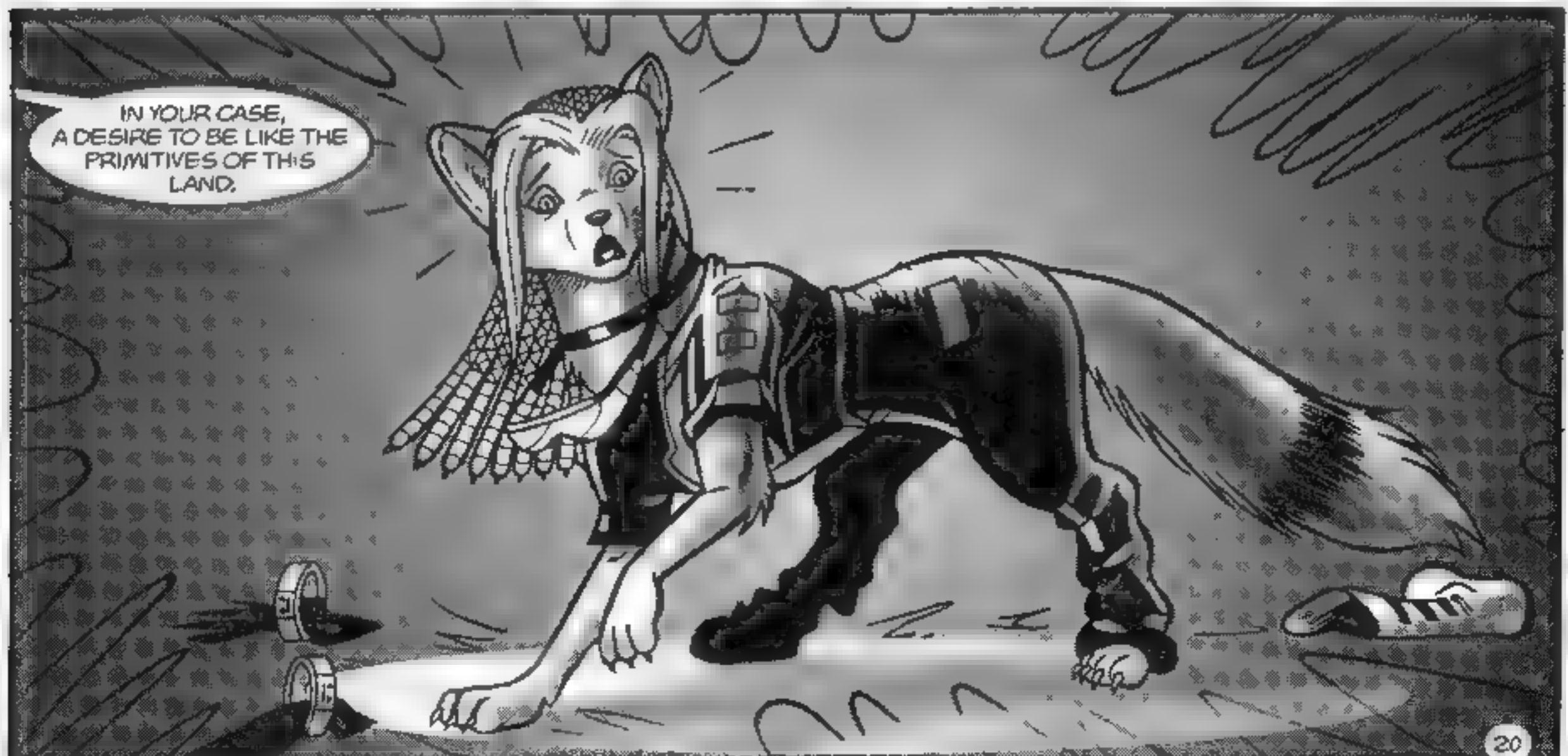
LET'S NOT AND
SAY WE DID!

YOU'LL PAY FOR THAT
VULPIN.



'A PHOENIX DOESN'T HAVE TELEPATHY,
BUT WE CAN CREATE THINGS FROM
ANOTHER CREATURE'S INNERMOST
DESIRSES.
AS, MY FEMALE HALF CREATED YOUR
CLOTHING BY MANIPULATING AIR
MOLECULES, I TOO CAN CHANGE THE
NATURAL STATE OF THINGS TO A MORE
DESIRED FORM.'

IN YOUR CASE,
A DESIRE TO BE LIKE THE
PRIMITIVES OF THIS
LAND.





MEANWHILE, ON THE FLOATING ISLAND.











I'LL MANIFEST MY UNIFORM.
THERE, I FEEL SO SELF CONSCIOUS
ABOUT THIS UNIFORM SOMETIMES, BUT
I THINK WALICE LIKES ME
IN IT.

I'M IN HIS MIND AND SEEING
THINGS FROM HIS PERSPECTIVE.

AMAZING, SO MANY THINGS AND
SUCH VASTNESS INSIDE OF HIS
MIND.

OH!

PHENIX AND XENIF!
THEY'RE SO BEAUTIFUL
YET SCARY TOGETHER.

THAT'S IT!

PHONIX ISN'T
A NEW PHONIX, HE'S
ACTUALLY PHENIX AND
XENIF COMBINED!

IT'S LIKE WHAT THE
PROPHET SAID, IT'S THEIR
PHYSICAL BOND THAT'S
CREATED PHONIX!

MAYBE IF I GET
PHENIX'S ATTENTION
I CAN MAKE HER
BREAK THE
BOND.

PHENIX!
WAKE UP!



THEN THAT EXPLAINS THE LITTLE SURPRISE
HE SET UP FOR ME EARLIER. THEN WE'VE
FOUND WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR.

PHENIX IS RIGHT IN FRONT
OF US. NOW WE HAVE TO FIND
A WAY TO GET HER
OUT!

I SAY WE TEAR HER
OUT ALONG WITH FINDING
OUT WHAT HE DID WITH
MY SISTER AND MAX!

BUT NEITHER POSSESSED THE FULL
POWER OR KNOWLEDGE OF ITS PHOENIX
PREDCESSORS SO ONE SOUGHT OUT
THE OTHER TO BECOME WHOLE.

SO NOW YOU FACE THE FULL
MIGHT OF A FULL BLOOD
PHOENIX, I SAY TO YOUR
CHALLENGE,

BRING IT ON!

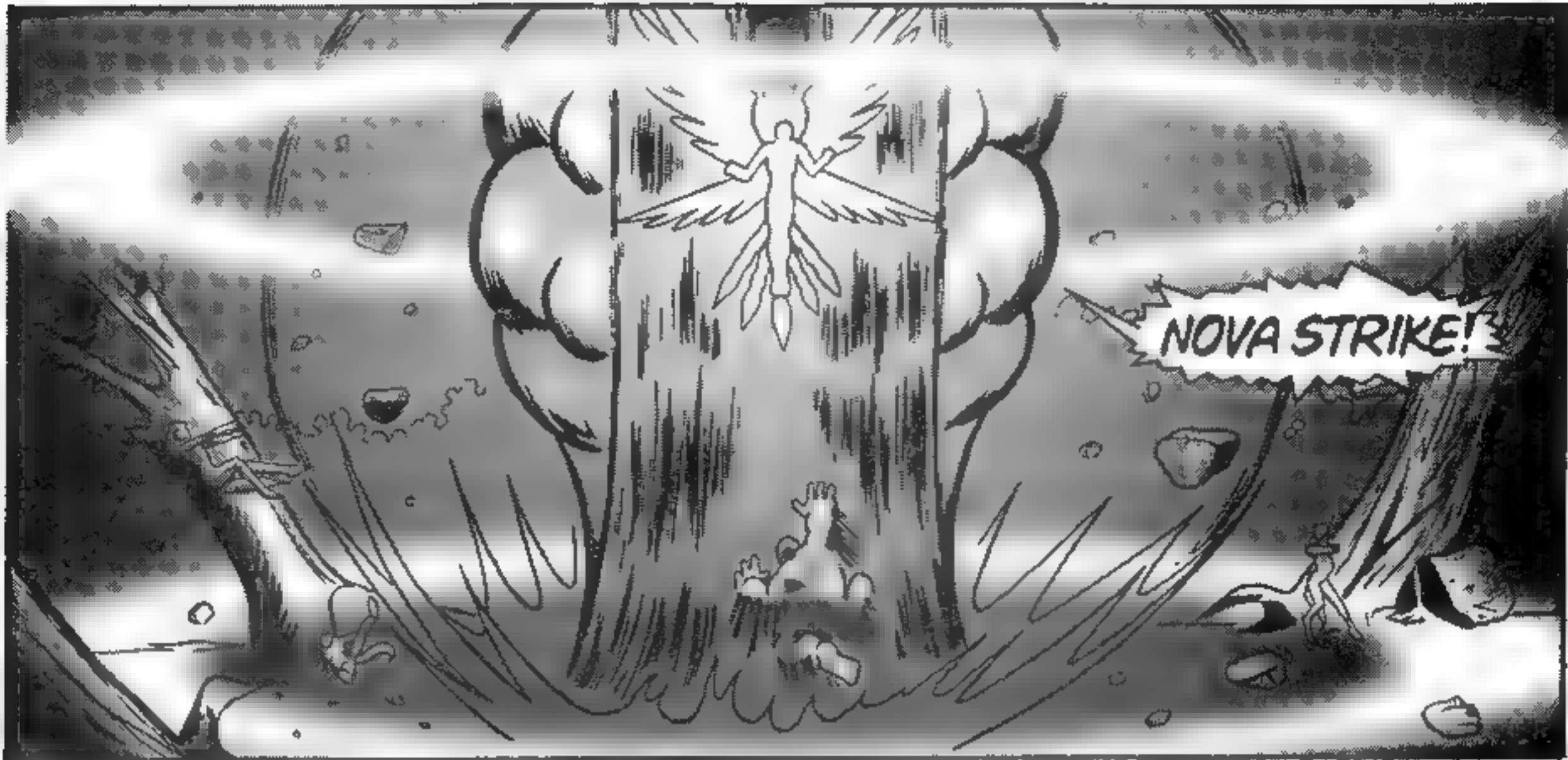
THE WEASEL IS CORRECT MORTALS.
I AM INDEED THE COMBINED MIGHT OF
PHENIX AND XENIF WHEN THE ORIGINAL PHOENIX
DIED, THEY DIVIDED HIS ESSENCE IN HALF.

ONE HALF ■ IS COMBINED WITH THE BODY
OF HIS DEAD LOVE AND THIS PHENIX WAS
BORN THE OTHER CONTINUED THROUGH THE
NATURAL REBIRTHING PROCESS OF THE
PHOENIX AND XENIF WAS BORN

BUT KNOW THIS,

TONIGHT WILL BE YOUR LAST, AND AFTER YOU ALL THOSE MORTALS WHO WOULD LIVE AND LOVE

THEIR PATHETIC MATES WILL SUFFER AS A LONE PHOENIX MUST SUFFER!











YOU THINK YOU HAVE THE
POWER TO STOP ME, YOU HALF
LIVING MONSTER?

I'M A
PHOENIX, THERE IS NOTHING
I CAN'T HAVE THAT!
SIRE!

NOVA STRIKE!

AAARGH!

NOW MAKE PEACE WITH YOUR
MAKER, BECAUSE YOU WILL
NEVER INTERFERE WITH MY
PLANS AGAIN!

YOU LEAVE HIM
ALONE!

NO MORE
XENI!

I WILL NOT STAND AND
WATCH ANOTHER ONE OF
MY FRIENDS HURT AGAIN!
YOU CLAIM TO LOVE ME,
BUT TREAT ME LIKE A
THING, NOT CARING WHAT
MY WISHES OR DESIRES MAY
BE.

WELL,
I GOT NEWS
FOR YOU PAL!

IT SURE THE
KENAL ISN'T
YOUR
SOLAR BLAST!





FIND COVER!
PHENIX IS CUTTING
LOOSE!



WHY, WHY
COULDN'T YOU HAVE
JUST LEFT ME ALONE?



BECAUSE IT WAS OUR DESTINY TO FIND ONE ANOTHER, TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER TO BE ONE WITH ONE ANOTHER. ALONE, YOU WOULD HAVE NEVER BECOME A COMPLETE PHENIX. YOU WERE CREATED DIFFERENTLY, WITHOUT THE COMBINED KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE AND INSTINCTS OF ALL THE PHENIXES THAT PRECEDED US, BECAUSE IN TRUTH YOU ARE ONLY HALF OF WHAT YOU SHOULD BE.

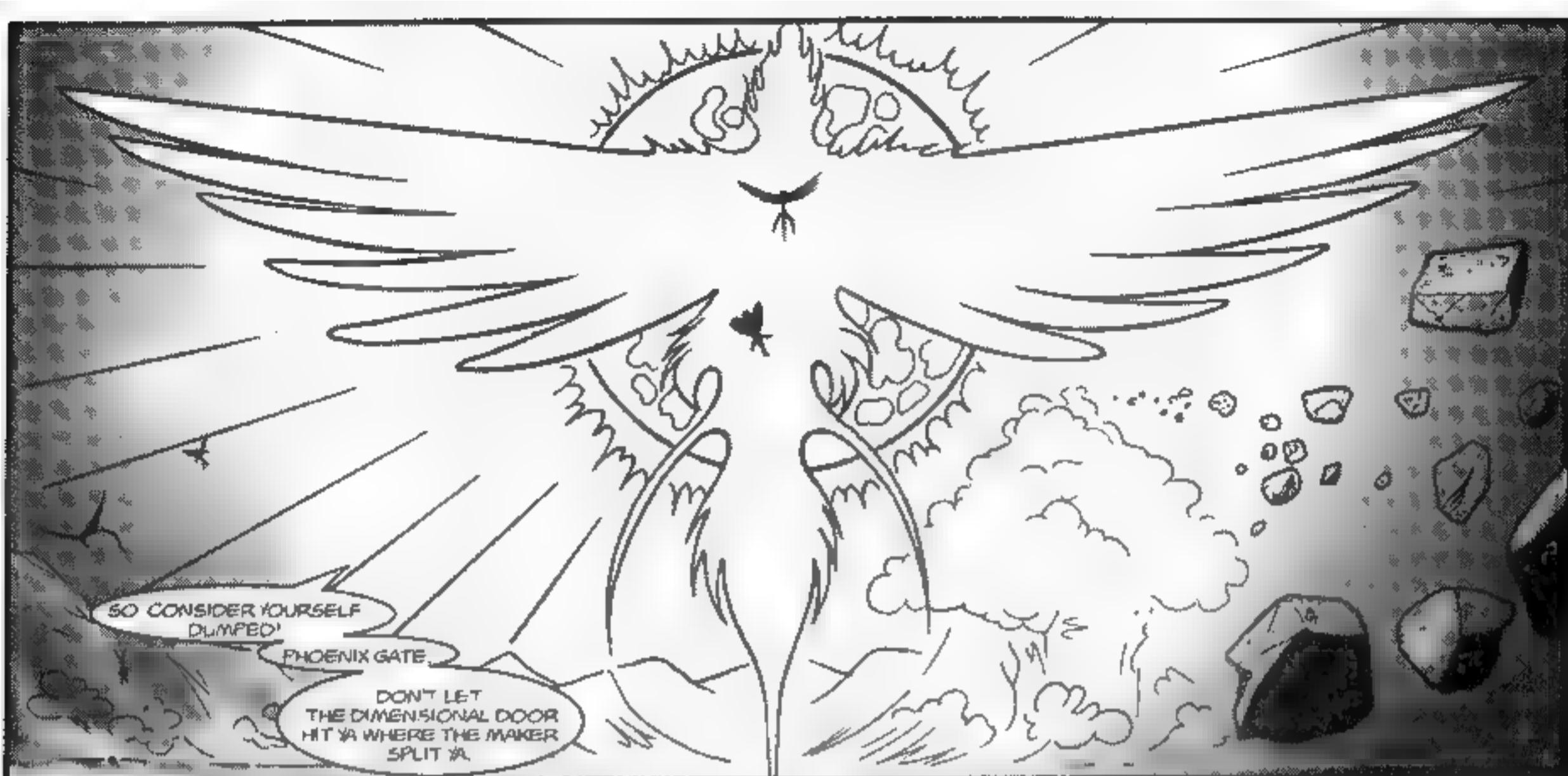


I'M ONLY HALF, BUT NOW THAT WE HAVE JOINED WE BOTH HAVE ALL THE KNOWLEDGE WE HAD BEEN DENIED APART!

BUT HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT'S WHAT I WANTED?

I LIKED ME THE WAY I WAS! I DIDN'T NEED ALL THAT KNOWLEDGE TO KNOW WHO I AM, I LIKE ME JUST THE WAY I WAS!

I DON'T LOVE YOU XENIF AND FRANKLY THE SIGHT OF YOU MAKES ME SICK!



PHENIX, TOGETHER YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM THE HUJMANS! THEY'RE NOTHING TO JS. TOGETHER WE COULD DESTROY THEM WITH A MERE THOUGHT!

DO YOU REALLY WANT TO LIVE A LIFE OF WATCHING THOSE YOU CARE FOR DIE IN FRONT OF YOU WHEN YOU CAN HAVE SOMEONE TO LOVE ALL OF YOUR LIFE?

DON'T DO THIS!

THINK, WE'RE PHOENIXES.

WE OUTLIVE ANY MORTAL WE COME IN CONTACT WITH!

ARGH!
SONICS!

SHE'S MADE UP HER MIND, XENIF, SHE DOESN'T WANT YOU AND YOU STILL HAVE TO PAY FOR WHAT YOU DID TO KYRA!

PISH 9.

NOOOO!

HAVE A GOOD TRIP, XENIF!





I AM PHAROBUS, THE SOUL COLLECTOR, AND I HAVE SOUGHT TO ADD A PHOENIX TO MY COLLECTION FOR MANY YEARS.

BUT THIS ONE IS DIFFERENT. NEVER HAS THERE BEEN A FEMALE PHOENIX BEFORE. SHE DOES NOT KNOW HOW TO START REINCARNATION INSTINCTIVELY.

HER INEXPERIENCE WILL BE HER DOWNFALL. HER HEART AND THUS JUDGMENT IS MINE.

THE PHOENIX IS A TRICKY CREATURE TO CATCH.

UPON ITS DEATH IT REINCARNATES ITSELF, MAKING IT VERY ELUSIVE TO MY GRASP.

NOT SO FAST, SCAVENGER OF THE DEAD!

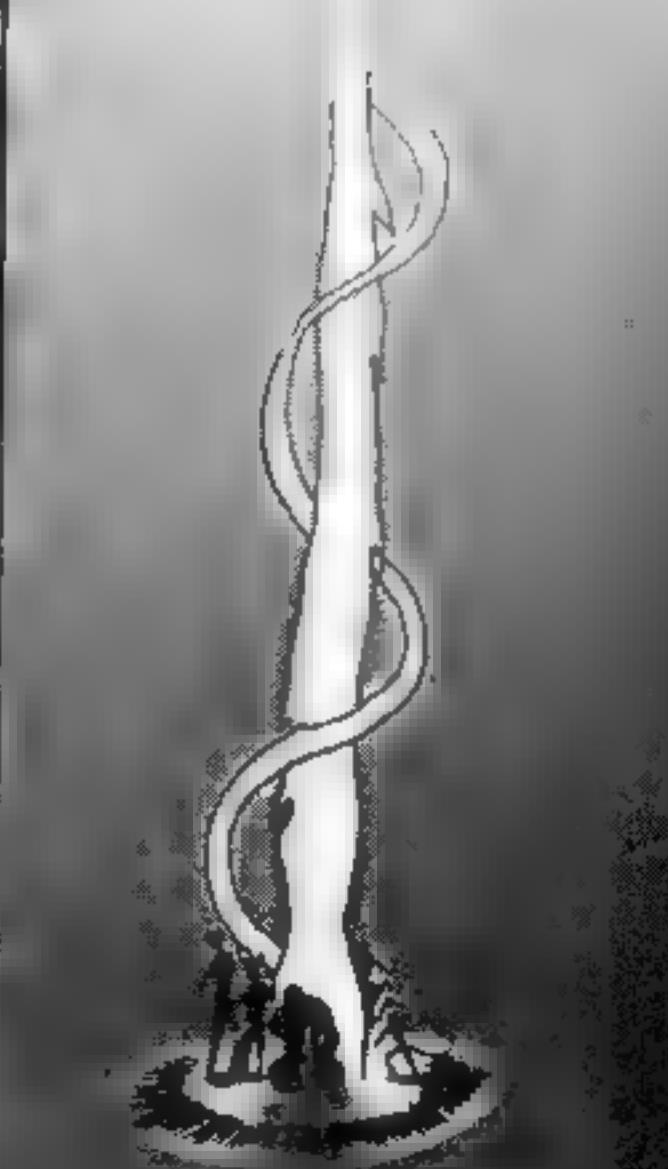
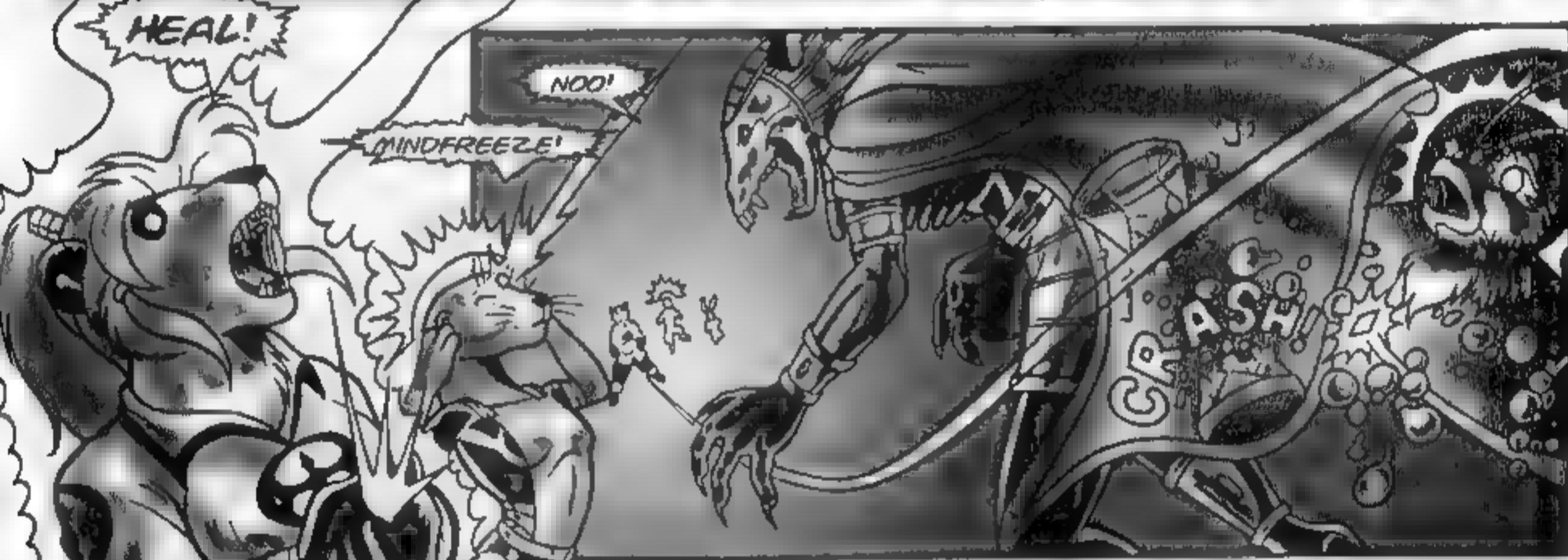
WHO DARES TO INTERFERE WITH THE WEIGHING JUDGMENT?

WHO!?

PROPHET! BUT HOW?

YOU THINK I'D LET MY DAUGHTER DIE PANDORA?

NO, I FORESAW THIS MOMENT YEARS AGO. IT SEEMS THAT I HAVE HER TO THANK FOR MY EXTRA LONGEVITY, AND I PLAN TO USE WHAT LIFE I HAVE IN THESE OLD BONES TO INSURE HER'S.





WHAT WILL YOU DO NOW, UNICOR?

WE'LL REBUILD AND SEARCH FOR MAELSTROM.

I MAY NEVER SEE THEM AGAIN, YOU KNOW.
I'M ALONE AGAIN.

THIS IS A FEELING THAT I KNOW WELL, MY FRIEND. WE ARE RARE AS WELL, BUT KEEP HOPE.
YOU'LL FIND THEM AGAIN.

HE MUST HAVE USED HIS MAGIC TO TELEPORT AWAY DURING THE CONFUSION, BUT WITH HIS SCHEMES UNFOLDED HIS INFLUENCE ON EDEN IS GONE.

THERE, THERE CHILD. IT'LL BE FINE.

BUT MOMMA, I HURT HIM SO BAD! THEY HATE ME, AND THE NEW MEMORIES!
I'M A TERRIBLE LEADER!

HUSH. SUCH TALK.

THEIR CARE FOR YOU HASN'T CHANGED, AND THOUGH THINGS WILL BE DIFFERENT THEY WILL TURN OUT FINE.
YOU WILL LEAD THEM WELL. HAVE I EVER LIED TO YOU?

THEN DISCUSSION OVER. YOU GO AND LEAD THEM AND HAVE FAITH IN YOURSELF.

AND CUT BACK ON THOSE SNACKS.

I'VE TOLD YOU ABOUT SWEETS!

FAREWELL MY CHILD. I LOVE YOU.

THANK YOU MOMMA! BYE BYE!

FINALLY, MY JOB IS COMPLETE.

PROPHET!

I KNOW, P'TAR.

IT IS TIME TO FINISH OUR DEAL, JACKALOPE.

YES, I'VE LIVED A LONG LIFE. 130 YEARS IS LONG ENOUGH.

P'TAR, MIND THE SKYRAYS DEAR.

EPILOGUE!

"FASCINATING"

THEIR PARANORMAL CAPABILITIES ARE FAR BEYOND ANYTHING WE'VE PERSONALLY BEEN ABLE TO DEVELOP WITH OUR OWN HYBRIDS.

DEMON

EXECUTE
SCOUT

222222

ANIMAL

THEY'RE
SO ADVANCED, YET
SO DANGEROUS TO MY
PLANS.

WE MUST FIND A
WAY TO CONTROL THEM.

CAPTAIN MAHN,
WE ARE READY
FOR THE
PROCEDURE.

THANK YOU,
COMMANDER.

HOW MUCH DOES
THE SCIENCE COUNCIL
KNOW ABOUT THIS?

ONLY THAT IT'S A MEDICAL
PRECAUTION AND YOU WILL
BE UNAVAILABLE FOR THE
INQUIRY.

"THANKS TO THE TEMPORAL DISPLACEMENT OF THE WORMHOLE, THE HYBRIDS HAVE HAD MORE TIME TO EVOLVE THROUGH BREEDING THAN THE ONES IN OUR CARE. THEY'VE ALSO GROWN MORE INDEPENDENT AND POSE A THREAT TO OUR RE-ESTABLISHING CONTROL OF THE EARTH.

GOOD. WHILE I'M
CAPTAIN OF THE
SCIENCE DIVISION, THE
COUNCIL WOULD STILL NOT
APPROVE OF MY PLANS TO
USE THE ADVANCED
PLANET-SIDE HYBRIDS AS
MY PERSONAL
BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS.

THE ORIGINAL KEEPERS WERE
SUPPOSED TO KEEP CONTROL OF
THE CREATURES, BUT THEY HAVEN'T
REPORTED IN YEARS."

I WANT TO KNOW WHY
THE KEEPERS HAVEN'T
CHECKED IN!

YES SIR.

SIR, WE'VE RECEIVED A
REPORT FROM ONE OF THE
SLEEPERS FROM THE INITIAL
DRONE SCOUT TEAM.

LET ME SEE IT
IMMEDIATELY.

THIS IS DR. HILDA VON BURDEN
REPORTING. OPERATION
POWERSHIFT IS UNDER WAY.

MY
AGENTS ARE CURRENTLY
EXECUTING PHASE ONE,
ANDOROZON.
BURDEN OUT.

THIS
IS EXCELLENT NEWS COMMANDER.
WE MAY GAIN CONTROL OF THE
PLANET WITHOUT ANY RESISTANCE
AT ALL IF THIS IS SUCCESSFUL.

NOW PREP
ME FOR THE
OPERATION.

YES SIR.

THANK YOU PROFESSOR DANNOURA FOR THE UPGRADES. MY SISTER TSUNEKO AND I ARE VERY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR KINDNESS.

YOU'RE WELCOME KARABINER, BUT PLEASE DON'T BE SO FORMAL. YOU CAN CALL ME KEN OR THE NICKNAME MY FRIENDS HAVE GIVEN ME, STINKEN.

THE OTHERS SAID THEY'D MEET US BACK AT THE LAB SO WE COULD GO OUT AND CELEBRATE TODAY'S SUCCESS.



BUT WHERE ARE MY MANNERS?

I AM ZORA, LEADER OF THE E.C.S., AND I'VE COME TO MAKE YOU AN OFFER YOU DARE NOT REFUSE.

